

Belfast City Council

(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast



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Draft for Development Committee, October 2011

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Contents

1. Improving Services for the People of Belfast.....	3
2. Responding to the Needs of All the Citizens of Belfast.....	3
Causes of poverty	3
3. Actions on the Ground	4
4. Building Urban Competitiveness	4
5. Review and Improve	5
4. Action plan 2012 to 2017	6
Appendix 1: How can we measure our impact?	15
Appendix 2: Who have we engaged with to date?	16
Internal council stakeholders	16
External stakeholders	16
Development Committee	17

1. Improving Services for the People of Belfast

Belfast City Council cannot eradicate poverty but we can make our services more accessible and use our resources more effectively so that we support people where they are now, facing the long-term effects of the recession.

Under this Framework the Council will:

1. Ensure that our services are more accessible;
2. Target our resources more effectively;
3. Work in partnership with other lead government departments to deliver on-the-ground projects that will support citizens; and
4. Advocate for the people of Belfast who are experiencing poverty and inequalities.

Council plays a crucial role as the advocate for the city. As advocates Members can influence debate and lead action to improve the quality of life of its citizens.

2. Responding to the Needs of All the Citizens of Belfast

Nearly half of Belfast's population live in some of most deprived Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland¹. Many parts of Belfast have 'hidden' pockets of poverty within more affluent areas. This Framework seeks to ensure that the Council's services are targeted to meet the needs of all citizens.

A household in poverty is 'one with an (equivalised) income that is 60% or less than that of the median household income in the year'. Under this definition around 20% of Belfast's population live in relative poverty (which is higher than the EU average of 16%).² In absolute terms this works out at around £115 per week for a single adult with no dependent children or £195 per week for an adult with two dependent children under 14.

The OFMDFM Central Anti-Poverty unit states that 'people are considered to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to prevent them from enjoying a standard of living, which would be regarded as acceptable by society generally.'³

Causes of poverty

Poverty is most strongly associated with worklessness. Children's poverty in particular is directly linked to living in households where no adult is employed. Households at the fringes of the labour market are also at substantial risk – the

¹ <http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk>

² 'Poverty in Belfast', M. Morrissey (2008)

³ OFMDFM Central Anti-Poverty unit <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/equality/central-anti-poverty-unit.htm> (accessed 11 October 2011)

Belfast City Council

(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

'working poor'. Households headed by a lone parent with dependent children are also at risk; as are pensioners when they are entirely dependent on state pensions and associated benefits.⁴

While concentrations of such 'at-risk' households can be mapped to particular parts of Belfast, it is important to note that such households can exist in any part of the city – and can often become 'hidden' in statistical analyses.

The council can address some of the causes of poverty, for example working on job creation, skills development, supporting people back into the labour market all address worklessness. Council can better target its resources to support people in 'hidden' pockets of poverty. Council can also work to support people in terms of the impact of poverty by making services such as parks, leisure centres, community centres and events and venues as accessible as possible.

3. Actions on the Ground

The council can address some of the causes of poverty, for example working on job creation, skills development, supporting people back into the labour market all address worklessness. Council can better target its resources to support people in 'hidden' pockets of poverty. Council can also work to support people in terms of the impact of poverty by making services such as parks, leisure centres, community centres and events and venues as accessible as possible.

This Framework describes some work we're already doing but people in Belfast may not realise we're doing, and some new work which we think will tackle the causes and impacts of poverty.

Some examples are:

- Support for social economy projects – advice and guidance on public sector contracting
- Investigate (expanded) use of social clauses
- Community tourism and outreach – training and advice for local communities on how to develop tourism products
- Raise skills and reduce worklessness - HARTE programme supports long-term unemployed people to get jobs in hospitality sector
- Support and fund advice provision infrastructure in Belfast
- Reduce fuel poverty – mainstream fuel stamp initiative
- In partnership with the Public Health Agency provide free access to leisure facilities in the most deprived wards in Belfast
- Tackle health inequalities via the new Belfast Health Development unit and the Belfast Strategy Partnership

4. Building Urban Competitiveness

⁴ 'Poverty in Belfast', M. Morrissey (2008)

Belfast City Council

(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

The Council's recent research on Belfast's economic competitiveness showed that the inequalities in the city, and the high rates of economic inactivity which did not improve during the boom and have worsened in the recession, continue to be a major drag on economic growth and competitiveness.⁵ Directly addressing poverty and inequalities will support people directly and build urban competitiveness. The bottom line is, Belfast cannot be competitive if a large percentage of its population live in poverty.

The Council's commitment to a Stimulus Investment Package aims to support economic growth and urban competitiveness and address the specific impacts of the recession. This includes the need to address the causes of poverty including job creation, improving employability and skills, supporting social economies, tackling wider health inequalities and exploring the possibilities around the green new deal.

5. Review and Improve

Progress in terms of implementing the Framework will be reported via the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The whole Framework will be reviewed every year to ensure it remains aligned to emerging issues, in line with key initiatives such as the Stimulus Investment Package.

⁵ Research into the competitiveness of Belfast, 2011, Oxford Economic, presented by Neil Gibson, State of the City: Development Debate, June 2011

4. Action plan 2012 to 2017

Key

New Initiatives	
Existing Initiatives	

Theme	Initiative	Council lead	Potential partners	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
City leadership	Develop an online resource for sharing information on poverty and social exclusion for all partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up website and gather information Administer the portal Monitor its success 	Development (PBDU)	Community and Voluntary sector, Academia	✓	✓	✓		
	Integrate the new equality framework in corporate planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with Good Relations Unit to develop a new Equality Screening Tool Undertake an audit of inequalities in the council Prepare interim action plans Prepare action plans in line with new corporate plan 	Good relations	Equality Commission	✓				
	Ensure up to date poverty & inequalities data included in CityStats info <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include poverty & inequalities related indicators in profiles Share profiles with external partners Use the information to influence decision making 	Development	NISRA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		SNAP		✓				
		SNAP		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		SNAP			✓	✓	✓	✓

Belfast City Council
(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

<p>Maximise investment and funding streams to support Council work on poverty & inequalities</p>	<p>Development</p>	<p>Other local authorities, COMET, EU</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake the BIG lottery Community Planning project 	<p>HES/Belfast Health Development Unit</p>		<p>✓</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the Eurocities Social Affairs Forum explore the funding opportunities for the council 	<p>Development</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively engage in the post 2013 lobby for future structural funds 	<p>Development</p>		<p>✓</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore for the opportunities under the new Eurocities Lifelong Learning Working Group 	<p>Development</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete (and undertake) two sports bids to tackle violence in sports and better use parks 	<p>Development</p>		<p>✓</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue influencing at a European level for funding streams to tackle inequalities 	<p>Development</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Exchange best practise with European and national partners</p>	<p>Development/HES</p>	<p>Eurocities, Urbact</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with partners at events, seminars and meetings 			<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue engagement in the Eurocities Task Force on Roma and the 'I am Roma' project through the Belfast Health Trust 			<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver actions under the Open Cities migrant project 			<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commemorate the EU Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between the generations 			<p>✓</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate at relevant events, seminars and meetings 	<p>Support from EU Unit</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue participation in Belfast in Europe group and contribute to joint projects 			<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>

Belfast City Council
(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showcase Belfast case studies through portals and newsletters Use the relevant best practise examples in the poverty Framework delivery Undertake one lead project at a European level 			✓	✓	✓	✓
	<p>Undertake any necessary research with external partners – aim is to monitor social impact of policy environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to and support research on inequalities and overcoming barriers to participation 	Development				✓	✓
	<p>Develop partnerships and build political legacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to development of NI Child Poverty Framework Annual inequalities briefing for Members 	Chief Executive’s	All	✓	✓	✓	✓
		PBDU/HES		✓			
<i>Better opportunities for success</i>	<p>Utilising council assets and facilities to reach marginalised groups (community, open spaces and leisure venues)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support delivery of employability and skills programmes 	Development (EDU & Com Services), Parks and Leisure	DEL		✓	✓	
	<p>Raising skills and reducing worklessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of Year 3 of the HARTE programme Maximise opportunities through Titanic Quarter partnerships (10 HARTE programme recruits have already gained jobs). 	Development (EDU)	DEL	✓			
			DEL	✓	✓	✓	

Belfast City Council
(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through Titanic Quarter partnership ensure that long-term unemployed gain jobs in Titanic Belfast and extend apprenticeships to other companies in TQ 			✓	✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify joint initiatives with Belfast Employment and Skills Board to address employment challenges of target groups 		BESB		✓	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll-out of the 'Step Up to Work' initiative 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Actively support development of social economy projects</p>	Development (EDU)/ Property and Projects						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice and guidance to social economy enterprises who wish to apply for Council tenders 				✓	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue delivery of 'Meet the Buyer' events 				✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a social economy enterprise database 				✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a dedicated member of council staff as first point of contact for social enterprises 				✓			
<p>Develop community tourism enterprises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate current tourism infrastructure along the relevant tourism corridors (via Integrated Tourism Framework) 	Development (CA&T)	NITB		✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage communities in relevant areas to raise awareness and the potential of social economy enterprises 					✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange necessary training and advice provision 						✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute in setting up at least one social economy enterprise per tourism hub in the city 						✓	✓
<p>Ensure full inclusion of marginalised people through the council's employment programmes</p>	Finance and Resources	DEL					

Belfast City Council
(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through Disability Framework ensure people with disability have full access to employment opportunities • Provide at least 30 work experience placements for people with disabilities • Evaluate success of placements • Continue engagement with Government’s new Workable programme • Continue monitoring reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and employees with disabilities • Extend the partnership and expand the initiative of resettlement of ex-offenders 		✓	✓			
<p>Provide support to older people who seek employment opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and enhance volunteering opportunities for older people 	HES/Community Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Extend a cultural and arts skills development programme for marginalised within the emerging Integrated Cultural Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend development and outreach of the culture and arts programmes 	Development (CA&T)		✓	✓		
<p><i>Better care for Belfast’s environment</i></p> <p>Assist in development of a regional food scheme to provide people in poverty with healthy food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the extent of possible support • Prepare a business case for the council • Disseminate information about the project and processes internally and externally • Commence project delivery (if feasible) 	HES/ Dev PBDU support	✓	✓	✓		
<p>Fuel poverty</p>	HES/Dev PBDU support				✓	

Belfast City Council
(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the possibility of piloting a warm zones approach in two socially deprived areas of the city which would aim to demonstrate a proof of concept to reducing fuel poverty and carbon emissions Explore funding opportunities for delivery of new energy efficiency powers 			✓			
	<p>Participation in Smart Cities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit a Smart Cities bid to create an energy plan for Belfast and reduce energy costs If bid is successful, deliver a project 			✓			
	<p>Continue fuel stamp initiative and aim to extend it to all households in need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the most vulnerable access the scheme Mainstream the fuel stamp initiative with existing internal resources 	HES	DSD			✓	✓
<i>Better support for people and communities</i>	<p>Ensure maximum delivery of NR commitments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue coordination and monitoring of the council's delivery of NR commitments 	Development (SNAP)	All relevant agencies			✓	✓
	<p>Increase access to cultural development and outreach initiatives across the city (via the emerging Integrated Cultural Strategy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through Creative Legacies funding increase access to Section 75 categories and other marginalised groups Through City of Festivals project remove barriers to access of marginalised groups 	Development (CA&T)	Arts Council			✓	✓
				✓		✓	✓
				✓		✓	✓

Belfast City Council
(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

<p>Develop community gardens in the areas of need</p>	<p>Parks and Leisure</p>		✓	✓	✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the scheme of four delivered projects Develop new initiatives 								
<p>Support & fund advice provision infrastructure in Belfast</p>	<p>Development (Com Services)</p>	<p>CAB, Advice NI & Law Centre</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue investing £800,000 a year in funding Build capacity of the advice providers Maximise the uptake of the rate relief (esp. by older people) Support extended outreach activity of the advice providers 			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Community Support Development Programme with our partners</p>	<p>Parks and Leisure</p>	<p>Sport NI, DSD, Public Health Agency</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Active Communities programme across the city Deliver of the programme by community network (Belfast Community Sports Development Network) 				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>Develop capacity building through Community Development strategy</p>	<p>Community across the council</p>		✓					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop community development strategy Implement the strategy 				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p><i>Better services</i></p>	<p>Explore feasibility of a Belfast Pass at a reduced rate for people on low incomes</p>	<p>Development</p>	<p>NITB</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a feasibility study Prepare a business case 	<p>PBDU, CA&T</p>			✓				
<p>In partnership with the Public Health Agency provide free access to leisure facilities in the most deprived wards in Belfast</p>		<p>Public Health Agency</p>			✓			

Belfast City Council
(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target 200 people in the most deprived areas 							
	<p>Ensure all children have access to parks and playgrounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a mapping exercise of provision 	SNAP to support P&L			✓	✓		
<i>Better value for money</i>	<p>Explore development of ‘social clauses’ in our procurement, project and regeneration spend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up of the inter-agency Social Clause Delivery Forum After the legislative powers are being given to the councils set up a Task and Finish team Undertake research and provide best practise case examples Undertake a feasibility study Prepare a business case for the council Implement a pilot project Undertake evaluation of the pilot project If successful roll-out across the council 	Properties and Projects (PBDU to support research)	Central Procurement Directorate, EC		✓			
					✓			
					✓			
					✓	✓		
						✓		
							✓	
							✓	✓
	<p>Develop indicators to measure the impact of regeneration on health and poverty in Belfast (linked to health)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot the indicators and methodology Identify target audience and provide training on the use of the tool 	HES	Belfast Healthy Cities			✓		
		HES				✓		
		HES					✓	
	<p>Ensure a maximum social impact of our regeneration projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support TQ working group 	Development			✓			

Belfast City Council

(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

• Explore the potential of setting up GEMS for North Foreshore, Titanic and Northern Fringe at Gasworks	PBDU/EI	✓	✓	✓		
• Develop evaluation and monitoring system that measures social impact	PBDU/EI		✓	✓		
• Link it to the indicators on the regeneration impact	PBDU/EI		✓	✓		
Regularly monitor, report, evaluate and improve the Framework	Development					Chief Executive's
• Undertake a study of available performance indicators	PBDU	✓				
• Prepare a performance Framework		✓				
• Monitor Framework on an annual basis		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Report every 6 months to COMT	PBDU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Annual report to Committee	PBDU, POG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Undertake and undertake independent evaluation every 2 years	PBDU, POG			✓		✓
• Review and improve the Framework every 2 years	PBDU, POG		✓		✓	
• Undertake final evaluation of the process and Framework	PBDU, POG – commission externally					✓

Appendix 1: How can we measure our impact?

The council places greater emphasis on creating effective performance management systems that allow us to better to measure the impact of our services across the city. This framework will utilise the approaches and data gathering techniques emerging from these systems to assist with measuring the impact on poverty in the city.

What we measure, and how it will be measured, are influenced by a number of factors:

- ✓ the measurable reality of poverty in Belfast
- ✓ the many inter-connected factors that contribute to it
- ✓ the particular subset of these factors on which the council can have a positive impact
- ✓ the strands of council work which can contribute to this impact

Bearing this in mind we are developing indicators with the following characteristics:

- ✓ ability to identify levels of poverty at a small area level
- ✓ their relevance to our corporate themes
- ✓ direct, unambiguous measures of progress
- ✓ available across different socioeconomic groups, geographies and over time
- ✓ have a direct link with interventions
- ✓ consistent with the decision-making cycle
- ✓ easy and inexpensive to collate
- ✓ understandable
- ✓ politically agreed

(The council is developing a Quality of Life matrix which will include a set of indicators to measure the economic, social and environmental impact of council's policies and projects. There will be an obvious overlap between the matrix's indicator sets and those of the poverty framework and it will be important that results and processes are shared.)

We have identified a basket of indicators classified under the following headings:

- 1. Low income & employment**
- 2. Children and young people**
- 3. Communities**
- 4. Adult wellbeing**

Details of each indicator are available upon request or via the council's **Citystats system**.

The monitoring process will involve a longitudinal assessment of poverty:

- Agreeing indicators to measure progress
- Setting targets to provide benchmarks
- Identifying a system(s) to house the data.
- Regular collation, analysis, review and response in relation to the future indicator data.

Appendix 2: Who have we engaged with to date?

We have discussions with a large number of stakeholders about the framework and the types of work that the council could usefully contribute. To date, while acknowledging the limited role of the council, there has been an overwhelming positive response to the creation of the framework.

Internally, officers have been keen to investigate how their work can contribute to delivering the framework while externally there has been enthusiastic support for the council in taking a proactive stance in pursuing this work.

Internal council stakeholders

- Members
- Health and Wellbeing group
- Corporate Management Team
- Policy Officers Group
- Departmental managers
- Heads of Service
- Various officers

External stakeholders

- Age NI (Provided advice)
- Barnardos (Facilitated eight research events with young people who are affected by poverty or disability)
- Equality Commission (Provided advice)
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- NICVA (provided advice)
- Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network (Facilitated six research events with people affected across the city)
- OFMDFM (Provided direction)
- Save the Children (Provided advice)
- Women Support Network (Facilitated six research events with women in poverty)

Belfast City Council

(Draft) Council Framework to Reduce Poverty and Tackle Inequalities in Belfast

Development Committee

(As of August 2011)

Alderman Christopher Stalford (Chairman)

Councillor Conor Maskey (Deputy Chair)

Alderman May Campbell

Alderman Tom Ekin

Alderman William Humphrey

Alderman Bob Stoker

Councillor Janice Austin

Councillor Tom Hartley

Councillor Máire Hendron

Councillor Colin Keenan

Councillor Bernie Kelly

Councillor John Kyle

Councillor Lee Reynolds

Councillor Nichola Mallon

Councillor Jim McVeigh

Councillor Caoimhín Mac Giolla Mhín

Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

Councillor Gavin Robinson

Councillor Guy Spence

Councillor Andrew Webb